

# REFLECTIONS

UPON

## That ACT of the GLOUCESTER Common-Council:

Which occasioned

Dr. FOWLER'S Printing his Discourse of Offences.

Together

With a short Reply to the Late Scandalous QUERIES offered  
to the Reverend Dean of *Canterbury*.



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# REFLECTIONS

Upon the ACT of the  
*Gloucester* Common-Council, &c.

**T**Here is nothing about which the world is more generally mistaken, than in the false Notions it has of Greatness and Power. For those commonly are esteemed the most fortunate and mighty, that *make their strength the Law of Justice*, that have Power to do mischief, and cannot be called to an Account for it, and that by a boisterous, irresistible Fury dare to oppress others, without any fear of punishment in this world, or thoughts of it in the next. But this is a Greatness that more properly belongs to Beasts and Birds of prey, than either to men or Christians. If there be any truth in the Laws, or Attractives in the Example of our Blessed Lord and Saviour, those ought to be esteemed the only *Heroick* Spirits, who dare do their duty, though dangers attend it; who have that entire Command over their Inclinations, as not to be moved to any unchristian unseemly passions, but with a Lamb-like meekness and patience can under the heaviest oppressions and provocations absolutely yield and submit themselves to the

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providence

providence of the Almighty, *who judges righteously, and tries the reins and the heart, Jer. 11. 20.* And finally, who can express the most fervent charity to their bitterest enemies, blessing those that curse them, obliging those that revile them, and with the same ardent zeal praying for the Souls of their persecutors, as they do for their own.

'Tis to be hoped that these *Gloucester* Gentlemen, whatever passions have of late clouded their Judgments, and like a false Optick represented those objects to be of the same colour, as the Glass which they looked through, yet time has not confirmed, but lessened and allayed their enmity against the Reverend Author of the Sermons *concerning Offences*, ( who I assure you is neither the Author, Procurer or Publisher of this Paper ; ) and now the heat of their Anger is somewhat abated and the dog days are ended, they will with some cool and sedate thoughts reflect upon the Order made by them *Aug. 20. 1683.* wherein they charged Dr *Fowler* in his Sermons, to countenance Sedition and Faction, and to Preach things that tended to the disturbance of well affected men in their City ; and therefore whenever he Preached at the Cathedral Church, none of them would go thither with the Sword in their Formalities to hear him, but to some other Church in the City to hear a Loyal Orthodox Divine, who was to be paid at the City Charges.

This Charge differs no more from what was imputed to Christ and his Apostles, than the late *Association* does from the *Solemn League and Covenant*. For our Blessed Saviour was represented as an enemy unto *Caesar*, *John. 19. 12.* And his Apostles after him, as *pestilent Fellows, movers of Sedition*, and such as *turned the world upside down*, for preaching down the *Jewish* and *Pagan* Idolatry and Superstition, just as Dr. *Fowler* Countenances Sedition and Faction by preaching down that which is *Popish* and *Anti-Christian*.

But is it so in very deed, that the 35 year of King *Charles* the second is to evacuate the Law that was made in the 25 of his Reign? Then the wisdom of his Majesty with the advice of his great Council of Parliament, for preventing dangers which might happen from  
*Popish*

*Popish Recusants*, made a Law that all Mayors, Aldermen, Sheriffs, Common-Council Men, &c. were to undergo a *Test*; wherein they were to declare their Belief that there is not any *Transubstantiation* in the Lords Supper, in the Elements of Bread and Wine, at, or after the Consecration thereof - - - And are *Romish* Emissaries less active and dangerous now, than they were ten years that are past? Had the *Papists* ever such advantage against us since the *Reformation*, as is now given them in the late Conspiracy by our Sectaries and Democratical Male-contents, who stile themselves *Protestants*, though they are as far from being so, as the Apostate Spirits from being Angels of Light? Why then must that Clergy Man be voted *Faction* and *Seditious*, whose Sermons are no other than a Confirmation of the Truth of your Oaths, and who delivers no other Doctrine from the Pulpit, than what is solemnly sworn by you in your Court? How shall dangers be prevented that may happen from *Popish Recusants*, if Ministers are treacherous to the Souls of the people, and forbear to fore-warn and antidote them against the pernicious Doctrins of the *Roman Church*? What will become of our Book of *Homilies* and *Liturgy*, if we must undergo such heavy Censures for preaching against the rebellious and novel principles of *Papists*? According to your vote, they must both of them be disused in Churches; For all the *Hay* and *Stubble*, Errors and Superstitions that make up the *Roman Religion*, are displayed and confuted in those two venerable Volumes. For shame then, disown your prejudices, and rectify your mistakes. What your passions moved you to enact, let your more sedate Judgments incite you (if not to abrogate, yet) to suppress. Do not by continuing in so strange an indiscretion, make your want of Charity to be as apparent as your want of Knowledge.

But to come unto a more close arguing; The matter of your *Order* (which some, if not most in the *Common Council*, were against the very minute it was made, as we are informed in *London*) is either *true* or *false*; if *false*, you ought to retract and repent of it, and to make the Reverend man Reparation for the injury and disgrace you designed against him. If *true*, the  
Law.

Law is open, let Deputies be impeached, and the offender proceeded against with the utmost rigour and Severity. He is now actually possessed of some hundred pounds *per An.* In Church-preferments ; and the loss of those (which he ought to suffer, if your Accusation be just ) would prevent the trouble and charge of having some other *Loyal, Orthodox Divine* to preach before you, when he ascends the Pulpit of the Cathedral. Nay to send him a begging together with his Wife and Children would be a punishment so adequately proportioned to his supposed Crimes, that it might *slake* the rage of his most malicious enemies, and would infallibly incapacitate him for ever *Preaching Sermons* amongst you that *countenanced Sedition and Faction*, neither would the *well affected men of your City* be any more disturbed by his Harangues from the Pulpit. And you may be assured, that the main end that the *Doctor* proposes to himself in the publication of his Sermons is not only to vindicate his own Innocency, but to furnish your zeal with matter to make good your charge against him. And if you desist from the prosecution of him, he and some others in the world will be apt to think, that either you are afraid and dare not, or mistaken and cannot. For he can no more question your want of will, than he does your want of prejudice against him.

It may be hoped, if you will have so much patience as to read over what he has offered you, with an attentive mind, though you may not be so just as to acknowledge, yet you will be so ingenuous as not to persevere in your enmity against him. Whether you will peruse or burn them, is not very much valued, we presume, by the Composer of them. You may be assured, that he has a clearer Innocence, than to be hector'd out of the performance of his duty. Those are to be so used by you, whose fears exceed their Integrity, and who for fear of losing Popular Applause dare not preach down Popular or Popish Errors, especially when the Pulpit is surrounded with Threats and dangers. If he could purchase his peace without betraying his trust, no one would be more forward to court your Favour than your late exploded Preacher. But he well knows, that he transgressed no limits of his duty, and has only *made you his enemies by telling you* impartially

ally the Truth; but 'tis not the first time, that an Innocent man has rendered himself obnoxious to the hard Censures of those, who have but a Superficial knowledge concerning him. You may be assured that we in London entertain other opinions of him, than you do at Gloucester: St. Paul himself had laid on him at *Philippi* πολλάς πληγὰς many Stripes; and yet at *Melita* he met with πολλαῖς τιμαῖς, many honours, *Acts*. 16. 23. *Acts*. 28. 10. It seems the very Barbarians paid him a more venerable respect, than the polished Citizens of *Philippi*. And there are too many in this licentious Age, who make it their very business and pleasure to defame Clergy men, and that either out of design to expose their Profession, or to veil and extenuate their own wickedness. Neither is it possible for the most unspotted Reputation to contend with Numerous Adversaries, whose tongues are their own, who acknowledg no Lord over them, and who are so habituated to calumnies, and Slanders, that (to use *Lucians phrase*) they are ever and anon casting out ὅλας ἀμάξας βλασφημιῶν, whole Cart loads of Reproaches upon the good names of those persons, whose Doctrines or Lives are a Reproof to their vileness and Immoralities.

But when 'tis well considered, it will appear that one great reason of the Intemperance of mens Tongues in assaulting their Neighbours names, will be found to be a pragmatistical intermeddling in their Business. A Fault, very epidemical in some places; Where men step out of their Spheres and Stations, and shoot their Bolts against their Governors in Church and State, as well as against men of a more retired condition, into whose concerns and Affairs, they have so small a knowledge and insight, that if they pass a right sentence either upon their actions or discourses, 'tis (like the blind mans hitting of the mark) owing rather to their Stars, than to their understanding. And I verily believe (Gentlemen) that the publication of his Sermons is as plain a demonstration of the Incompetency of Vulgar and Mechanick Minds to judge of Pulpit discourses, as any thing that for some years past has been exposed to publick view. The Fate it has already met with, has been so cruel and severe, that it has exceeded all the Rules of Reason, Charity and Civility. The winds



winds were so high and boisterous, that no mid-way was admitted to suppress private hatreds, or silence publick clamours. Now it seems to be a Request equal and just, that we who are part of the *London* Clergy may be admitted as able Judges of Theological Discourses from the Pulpit, as any of you in your several Callings, that live at *Gloucester*. I do not know any *Divine*, tho never so *Loyal and Orthodox*, that undertakes to instruct Tradesmen how to measure Tape, to make up pills, to brew Ale or Beer : Now the truth is, we Divines in *London* do verily believe, that Doctor *Fowler* is as able to make a Sermon. as any Shop-Keeper is to sell his goods; that it is as free from *Faction* and *Sedition*, as any Drapers best cloth in *Gloucester* from Moths or rottenness. But who can help it, if there are Committees appointed for Religion at the *Tolsey*, as well as *Westminster*, and that a new sort of *Triers* are risen up to pass sentence upon *Divinity*, as well as *Divines*? Believe it Gentlemen, we shall never have peace either in *Church* or *State*, till men *study to be quiet and to do their own Business*, and avoid being *Busy-bodies in other mens matters*.

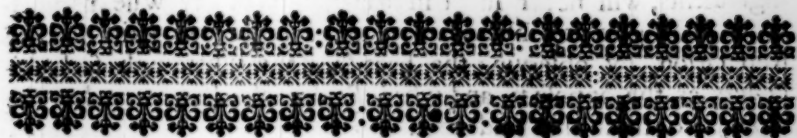
If *Edw. Fowler* Dr. of *Divinity* wanted *Compurgators*, you should have some hundreds to testify that they are fully satisfied he is as irreconcilable to Fanaticism, Strife and Contention, as he is to Popery or Debauchery. He truly abominates all things of these kinds. He knows also with what pathetick Arguments the Common Saviour of us all does conjure us to mutual Charity & Love. He knows too how his Apostle after him does with the most importunate Eloquence depress Contention and strife, and make it to be a mark of a *Carnal* mind, quite inconsistent with the true Christian Temper and Disposition. Now pray consider, whether the prejudice you have against the worthy Doctor, do not arise from false surmizes, and uncharitable misconstructions. It is not impossible but you may be mistaken in his principles: Nay, 'tis certain you were so, when you voted him to countenance *Faction & Sedition*. And jealousy and suspicion are the Bane of Friendship and Love. And therefore, be prevailed with to suppress your Censures, till you better understand his merits. For he is not the first person whose name has been traduced and rendered



dered infamous by wanton and petulant Tongues ; and yet afterward Providence has been pleased so to dissipate all clouds of Calumny, as to *bring forth his Righteousness as the Light, and his Judgment as the Noon day.* Pray also consider well, what an infinite Scandal it is to the Gospel of peace, and to the Church of *England*, that the Ministers of Religion should have the blackest characters fixed upon them, by those that pretend friendship to the King and Church. And therefore for Gods sake, and for your own souls sake, do not fortify your hearts against these propofals of Peace & Charity; do not create sport and triumph for *Gath* and *Askelon*, viz. For *Roman* and *Sectarian* Synagogues.

If this Advice be not embraced by you, I hope the good *Doctor* will receive the honour of your continued Enmity with a Joy proportioned to the vastness of its benefit. And perhaps one of the best Testimonies that a virtuous person can have of Gods love, is, that wicked and prophane men hate him. Neither is the satisfaction inconsiderable, when we owe the evils we suffer rather to other mens malice, than to our own guilts, and that we *suffer not as evil doers, but as Christians.* This consideration, will make us feel not only comfort, but security in mens causeless enmity. What Effect these persuasives may have upon you I know not ; But though you should go on in vilifying his person, undervaluing his labours, and assaulting his Reputation, you will not fail, I dare promise for him, of the Doctors charity, in pitying your mistakes, and praying unto God that he would *forgive his Enemies, Persecutors and Slanderers, & so turn their hearts* in this world, that their Souls may be eternally saved in the next.





A  
**Short Reply**  
 TO THE  
**Late Scandalous QUERIES**

Offered to the  
 Reverend Dean of *Canterbury*.

This Impudent Libeller begins thus;

SIR,

**I**N your Preface before *Bishop Wilkins Sermon*, you recommend Moderation to the world as a great virtue; Wherefore  
 The 1st. Query is, *Whether the greatest Trimmer be the most vertuous man? And if so,*  
 2dly, *Whether the Dean of Canterbury be not the most vertuous man in the whole World?*

*Reply.* That Moderation, which the Apostle would have known to all men, that has Integrity, Prudence, and Charity, for its constant  
 B 2 Ingredients,

Ingredients, will never suffer in the opinion of any wise man, because Fools give it a Nick-name; and I hope will gain further Reputation, by observing the brutish Rage wherewith such Libellers as this oppose it, and what *Poyson of Asps* is under the Tongues of those that traduce it.

3d. Query. *Whether a man born of Anabaptistical Parents, and who can be proved not to have been baptized at eight years of Age, can be supposed to be qualified to receive Orders of the Church of England, and to be made Dean of one of the most Eminent Sees thereof, who has nothing to recommend him, but his spewing up the Engagement?*

His 10th Query may be joyned to this, being of the same strain, in these words, *Whether or no the said Dean whom his Father call'd Jahnnny, no otherwise than he nam'd Spaniel Tray, at eight years of Age, and cannot prove that he ever since had water thrown upon his Face, or the Sign of the Cross made, may by vertue of his Orders, be judged a Christian?*

Reply. It is a Notorious Falshood, that either of the Reverend Deans parents was Anabaptistical: and it's so far from being possible to be true that he was not baptized at eight years of Age, that proof shall be made, if there be occasion, that before he was three weeks old, he was publickly baptized in the Parish Church where he was born. (Which fully answers the 10th Query also: ) and who but a Malicious Fool would have objected the taking of the Engagement by a meer Freshman? (for such he was when it was imposed on the University of Cambridge) though I know not that he ever took it, but am certain, if he did not then, he never took it.

4th Query. *Whether supposing it can be proved that the said Dean did in the later times Preach expressly against the Common Prayer in St. Maries Church in Cambridge, and that he has never since either*  
by

*by word or deed contradicted that Sermon, he may not reasonably be suspected to be of the same Principle still as he was at that time?*

*Reply.* I will engage on the Deans behalf, that all his Preferments which this Libeller envies him, shall lye at <sup>his</sup> Mercy, though his Merits never entitl'd him to any, if he can prove, that the Dean, who never preached any Sermon in Cambridge in his whole Life, has preach'd in St. Maries there against the Common Prayer; nay further, if he can prove so much as his preaching against it any where else: but I can prove he had a great zeal for it at 20 years of Age, notwithstanding the Prejudices of his Education.

5th Query. *Whether or no a man of his Constitution, who has run through so many Tryals, and is yet ( alive ) with a safe Conscience, may not at last be hoped to dye a good Musselman?*

*Reply.* I shall only say, That this sorry Creature has met with one Tryal ( and he needs no more ) to convince the World what Religion He's ambitious to dye in.

6th. Query. *Whether or no the said Dean design'd the Interest of the Church of England, when he preached a turn for Julian the Apostate, to give him Leave to Answer Dr. Hcks's Jovian?*

*Reply.* This Insinuation, that the Deans preaching in Southampton Chappel was design'd to serve Julian in answering Jovian, is as false as spiteful, and no less silly; for who can think that the obliging of one with whom he had no acquaintance, should be his motive to give a Sermon to an old Acquaintance? And who can suspect that Sermon to have done disservice to the Church of England, which found so good and great Acceptance when it was preached before the King?

7th. Query. *Whether or no it belongs to the Authority and Office of a Dean of the Church of England to vindicate every Traytor that appears guilty of High Treason?*

*Reply.*

*Reply.* I will ask him a Question, which when he answers, he will answer himself, viz. Whether it be not the Duty of every Dean to obey all *Sub-pæna's* of any of his Majesties Courts of Justice; and what this Rev. Dean did more amiss upon this occasion, than several Noble Lords, and other worthy persons did, who are equally reflected on in this Query ?

8th. Query. *Whether or no the said Dean did well, in defacing the Altar piece of his own Cathedral, for fear of offending tender Consciences ?*

*Reply.* I do not understand ( to use those words of the last Query ) how it belongs to the office of a Dean to answer singly for Acts done by a whole Chapter : nor how making a thing more beautiful can be called defacing it ; Nor lastly, Why the Image of the Sun should be contended for as the most proper Ornament for an Altar. But whatsoever others may do, I perceive those that have no Conscience, are but little concerned at offending tender Consciences.

9th. Query. *What Opinion we ought to have of this Dean, who at two Solemn Funerals preached the same Sermon ; First for a known Loyal Church of England man, and afterwards for a Fanatick Preacher ?*

*Reply.* There is no more conformable Church of England man, than Mr. Gouge was ( whom he calls a Fanatick Preacher ) as far as he was obliged to be so in a private capacity, and no man did ever declare a more hearty Abhorrence of *Schism* and *Separation* ; nay this his Fanatick Preacher was a *Licensed Preacher*, though he had no *Cure* ; and few Persons of more exemplary Piety and Charity adorn'd the Age, than the man whom he brands with this odious Character. Mr. L'estrang in his *Observer*, publish'd some few days after his Death, bestowed upon him a most honourable Character ; and no man, but one of this Libeller's profligate Conscience, would have thus impudently aspersed his Memory.

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The 10th. *Query* was set down and accounted for before.

11th. *Query. Whether or no the said Dean would not make a good Dean of Bray?*

*Reply.* Whether had not this *Ass* better never have *brayed* against the good Dean?

12th. *Query. What Religion is to be understood by the Protestant Religion?*

*Reply.* It is that Primitive Christianity, which thou hast neither *wisdom* to understand, nor *Grace* to own.

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The Reader of this may be assured, that the Reverend Dean is wholly a stranger to this paper, and his pardon is begg'd for publishing it without his Knowledge.

F I N I S.